The Willy-Nicky Correspondence

By Hermann Bieberstein
Foreword by Theodore Roosevelt

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The Willy-Nicky Correspondence

Being the Secret and Intimate Telegrams Exchanged between the Kaiser and the Tsar

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Meeting of the Kaiser and the Tsar at Bjorkö

The Willy-Nicky Correspondence

Being the Secret and Intimate Telegrams Exchanged Between the Kaiser and the Tsar

By

Herman Bernstein

With a Foreword by

Theodore Roosevelt

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Foreword by Theodore Roosevelt	7
Introduction by Herman Bernstein	11
The Willy-Nicky Telegrams	47

Acknowledgment is due to Vladimir Bourtseff, M. Schegoleff and Professor Tarle, the eminent historians of the Russian revolution, through whose courtesy I was enabled to secure the important documents for publication.

Acknowledgment is also due to The New York Herald for permission to reproduce this correspondence.

Herman Bernstein

To all who are working to make the world safe for democracy and for a durable, righteous peace, this volume is sincerely dedicated.

HERMAN BERNSTEIN

SAGAMORE HILL

November 6th, 1917.

My dear Mr. Bernstein,

I congratulate you on the noteworthy service you have rendered by the discovery and publication of these letters. They illuminate, with a glare like a flashlight, the dark places of diplomacy of despots; they show what diplomacy in autocratic nations really is, and what it has done and sought to do, right up to the present time. The whole world ought now to understand that the despotism of Germany was one of plot and intrigue no less than of ruthless brutality and barbarism, and that with a cynically complete absence of all sense of international morality and good faith it sought to bend to its purpose of evil the poor feeble

puppet who at the moment embodied the despotism of Russia. These letters should be made familiar to all civilized peoples.

They show the folly of the men who would have us believe that any permanent escape from anarchy in Russia can come from the re-establishment of the autocracy, which was itself the prime cause of that anarchy—for the governmental condition was so intolerable that they put a premium on the production of lawless violence in the ranks of the lovers of liberty and justice and fair play to all.

They show, furthermore, the wicked folly of all who would now treat with the German despotism for a negotiated peace, a peace without victory, a peace into which the wrong-doer and the wronged would enter on equal terms. This war was made by the militaristic and capitalistic autocracy of Germany, and it was acquiesced in and even promoted by the German socialistic party, which thereby proved

itself traitorous to the workingmen and farmers of the world. With these documents before them, no Americans who hereafter directly or indirectly support the Prussianized Germany of the Hohenzollerns can claim to stand in good faith for human rights, for equal justice, and for the liberty of small well-behaved nations.

Let me repeat, my dear sir, that in publishing these letters you have rendered a signal service to this nation and to all mankind.

Very sincerely yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

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Theodore Roosevelt

INTRODUCTION

During my recent stay in Russia I learned that shortly after the Tsar had been deposed, a series of intimate, secret telegrams exchanged between the Kaiser and the Tsar were discovered in the secret archives of Nicholas Romanoff at Tsarskoye Selo. Before leaving Russia I secured the complete correspondence which gives a clear insight into the system responsible for the sinking of the *Lusitania,* the use of poisonous gases, the violation of Belgium, the enslavement of the Jews in German Poland and Lithuania, the spurious promises to Poland, the sending of explosives in German diplomatic pouches to neutral countries to blow up neutral ships, the dissemination of germs to kill cattle and destroy crops, the baby-killing

Zeppelin raids, and the policy of "spurlos versenkt."

These intimate communications between Kaiser Wilhelm and Tsar Nicholas not only unmask the characters of the German emperor and the deposed Tsar of Russia, but also reveal to the world an extraordinary human document which discredits completely the German autocracy that is endeavouring to enslave mankind. The Kaiser is exposed as a master intriguer and Mephistophelian plotter for German domination of the world. The former Tsar is revealed as a capricious weakling, a characterless, colourless nonentity.

The complete correspondence, consisting of sixty-five telegrams exchanged between the Emperors during the years 1904, 1905, 1906 and 1907, forms an amazing picture of international diplomacy of duplicity and violence, painted by the men responsible for the greatest war in the world's history. The documents,

not intended for the eyes of even the Secretaries of State of the two Emperors, constitute the most remarkable indictment of the system of governments headed by these imperial correspondents.

The telegrams, written in English, are quaint and stilted in style, here and there, and most intimate and friendly in tone. They are at times amusing for their naïveté and childishness and amazing for their arrogance and conceit. The Emperors signed their telegraphic messages "Willy" and "Nicky." But when the Kaiser was angry,—when he believed that his rights were infringed, he made his demands in firm, stern terms, and instead of signing the telegram "Willy," as most of his messages were signed, he suddenly became "Wilhelm."

Side by side with the international intrigues and plots, these telegrams contain frivolous comments on men, affairs and the weather, petty diplomatic gossip, and repeated love mes-

sages from the Kaiser to "Alice," the German Princess who became the Tsaritsa of Russia.

These love greetings to the Empress of Russia assume a peculiar significance when it is recalled that the Kaiser was practically the match-maker between Alexandra and Nicholas, and that the German Empress of Russia dominated the Tsar, working for Germany's interests to such an extent that she not only sympathised and sided with Germany in this war, but actually made every endeavour to betray Russia to Germany through a separate peace. To accomplish this the former Tsaritsa sought to bring about Russia's defeat, kept Germany informed of Russia's military secrets, transmitting to Germany information she received in intimate letters from her husband, the Tsar, when he was at the front as the chief commander of the Russian army.

The correspondence, extending over a period of four years, shows the Kaiser conspiring

against England, endeavouring to deceive France, ensnaring Russia, plotting to violate Denmark, giving the Tsar fantastic military advice on how to defeat Japan. The Kaiser gave Nicholas lessons on how to fight during the Russo-Japanese war, and then counselled him concerning peace negotiations.

After the Kaiser had failed for nine years to make France a vassal State of Germany through an alliance with France against England, after all his promises and friendly manœuvres had miscarried, he determined to attack the problem from another side. He turned to the weak and feeble-minded Tsar of Russia, inducing him to form a secret alliance between Germany and Russia without breathing a word to Russia's ally, France, and then force France to join the alliance against England and break the agreement made between England and France in April, 1904.

It was the Kaiser's plan to form a secret

agreement with Russia first and then acquaint the French Republic with the accomplished fact. France would thus be compelled to decide quickly—either to join the newly organised combination against England or to break the Franco-Russian alliance and face German invasion in the near future.

The Kaiser knew the Tsar's weakness and took advantage of it for the purpose of furthering his own ambitions. The Tsar yielded to the cunning machinations of the Kaiser, and a secret treaty was signed. It was a treaty designed to make the Kaiser the master of Europe, while Russia, helping him in this, was at the same time practically forced from the ranks of the great world Powers.

The telegrams, dated July 5 and 10, 1904, dealing with the *Smolensk* and the *Scandia* episodes, are of especial interest, as they show how the head of the government responsible for the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the violation

of Belgium, the anti-American Mexican conspiracy and countless inhuman atrocities, expressed his indignation in 1904 over the seizure of the mail from a German vessel by a Russian cruiser. He wrote on that occasion: —"This act, a violation of international law, will create great surprise and disgust in Germany."

In the telegram dated July 10, 1904, the Kaiser called the seizure of the German steamship *Scandia* "an open violation of international sea law nearly adequate to piracy."

Nothing that has ever been written about the Kaiser or the deposed Tsar has served to unmask these unscrupulous rulers as they unmask themselves in their secret documents which would have remained buried in the private archives of the Tsar, had it not been for the great revolution that ended the reign of terror of the Romanoffs.

In these intimate telegrams the Kaiser

stands out as the craftiest of cynics and poseurs, plotting against the peace of the world, endeavouring to deceive Nicholas in the belief that his whole concern was for peace. Both talked for peace and plotted against it.

The Kaiser was deeply interested in the start of the Russian squadron under Admiral Rojestvensky and, as is seen from telegram number 13, tried at once, even without any secret treaties, to cause a break between France and England. While writing of the protest by Japan and England against Germany's furnishing coal to the Russian squadron on its way to the Far East the Kaiser told Nicholas "to remind your ally, France, of obligations taken over in the treaty of dual alliance with you."

In the event France should try to refrain from furnishing coal to the Russian squadron in her ports, the Kaiser promised the Tsar to threaten France, writing "though Delcassé is

an anglophile enragé, he will be wise enough to understand that the British fleet is utterly unable to save Paris."

He then stated to the Tsar that "in this way a powerful combination of three of the strongest Continent Powers would be formed."

At the time that the Kaiser kept informing the Tsar about the progress of the war, about peace negotiations, talking to him of the advantages of betraying France, retailing diplomatic gossip, advising him that new battleships "would be excellent persuaders during peace negotiations," he did not overlook his own business opportunities, informing Nicholas that "our private firms would be most glad to receive contracts."

Then the North Sea incident occurred, and Nicholas fell into the trap laid for him by the Kaiser. He immediately accepted the Kaiser's scheme of a secret alliance with Germany against England, adding that "France is bound

to join her ally." Nicholas asked the Kaiser "to lay down and frame the outlines of such a treaty."

That the Kaiser, who proposed the treaty, was quite prepared is evident from the fact that on the day after the receipt of the Tsar's telegram he informed Nicholas by wire that he had sent the draft of the treaty by special courier. To arouse the Tsar's anger still more the Kaiser telegraphed at the same time absurd stories about mysterious vessels among the British boats not belonging to the fishing fleet, and added "so there must have been foul play" in the North Sea incident.

Later he notified the Tsar that Great Britain was preparing to send an expedition to Afghanistan; he wrote reproachfully of the tendencies noticed in France and England to end the Russo-Japanese war as soon as possible; he again assured Nicholas that the Japanese armies were near exhaustion. He also

informed Nicholas that England wanted to let Russia have compensation in Persia for her loss of Manchuria, but he warned the Tsar not to be deceived by such promises, as England would not permit Russia to have access to the warm sea. Therefore he endeavoured to stir up new military enthusiasm in Nicholas on the eve of the fall of Port Arthur. Prating of peaceful intentions, the war lord urged the weakling of Tsarskoye Selo to disregard peace offers, and concluded his message by saying "I continue to watch everywhere for you."

When Nicholas showed signs of hesitation, the Kaiser warned him that the consequences of the secret treaty proposed by him would be most dangerous if any other Power were to learn of it. He telegraphed him, "No third Power must hear even a whisper about our intentions before we have concluded the convention."

The Tsar immediately assured the Kaiser

that he could fully rely on his loyalty and that he was eager to arrive at a speedy settlement of this serious question. On the day after this assurance was made Nicholas telegraphed to the Kaiser that he was sending him a note declaring his complete acquiescence with the Kaiser's wishes in the matter.

Then the Kaiser again instructed Nicholas with regard to the conduct of the war. A stockholder in the Hamburg-American line, the Kaiser was displeased because agents of the Hamburg-American line, who were in Russia at the time for the purpose of selling colliers to the Russian government met with difficulty in their transactions, as members of the Russian government for some reason refused to buy the ships. The Kaiser informed the Tsar of this, declaring the Russians were "pretending that they have no spare crews to man the colliers. This," he stated cynically, "cannot be true, and I suppose that the wish to

have peace at any price is uppermost in the minds of the parties who plead impossibility."

The Kaiser went on to give the Tsar advice how to overcome this attitude by outlining to him what Admiral Rojestvensky ought to do "if he would avoid defeat." The Kaiser reminded Nicholas, "It is lucky for you that the French have at all times, even against their own interests during the German war, maintained the point of naval law that belligerent vessels may remain in a neutral port for any length of time and without disarming." Therefore he concluded that the French government was "fully entitled to let the second squadron remain in Madagascar until the arrival of the third."

He also told the Tsar that if any one advised him to let Admiral Rojestvensky attack the Japanese before the arrival of reinforcements he "might ask that party whether he is ready to

take upon himself the responsibility for the result."

Thus he not only counselled the Tsar concerning the conduct of the war, but actually warned him against taking any one else's advice.

But when "Nicky" begged his German friend and adviser to give the necessary permission, "without which the further sailing of the squadron becomes entirely impossible," as the Hamburg-American colliers feared to give orders before getting instructions from the Chancellor, the Kaiser suddenly became formal and evasive. He reminded the weak-kneed Tsar that he had told him at the very beginning he would do nothing to prevent such an arrangement, but could issue no instructions to the Hamburg-American line, since it was "a private enterprise." He added that the Hamburg-American line knew the situation and must take the responsibility itself, that he in-

formed Ballin to act as he saw fit—"of course at his own risks."

The Kaiser, who but a short while ago had reminded his friend, the Tsar, that his private firms would be very glad to get orders from Russia, now protected his private interests by notifying the Tsar that he could not interfere.

Several months later, in 1905, the whole world was interested in the unexpected meeting between the Kaiser and the Tsar. It was arranged at the request of the Kaiser, who wired, "I would come as a simple tourist, without any fêtes." It was on that occasion that the plotting Kaiser made Nicholas sign the secret treaty.

Never forgetting the theatrical, "Willy" telegraphed to the Tsar that his guests did not suspect where they were going. While telling him that he had important news for him, he added, "The faces of my guests will be worth seeing when they suddenly behold your yacht.

A fine lark. Tableaux!" Then the arch conspirator, plotting to set the world aflame, while prating of peace, asked the Tsar, "Which dress for the meeting?"

In an exhaustive article on the significance of this "most sensational and actually most illuminating" correspondence between the Kaiser and the Tsar, *The New Europe* of London says of the pact of Bjorkö as follows:

"At this point the curtain drops upon the conspirators. A convention for joint action by Germany and Russia in the event of the former being attacked by England and Japan on the score of her breach of neutrality in offering coaling facilities to the Baltic fleet seems to have been signed immediately; but the negotiations for an alliance of wider scope appear to have hung fire until the summer of the following year, when the interview between the Kaiser and the Tsar at Bjorkö (24 July, 1905) gave the former an opportunity to use his im-

mense personal influence over Nicholas II to stifle the latter's scruples. The Kaiser came to Bjorkö armed with a draft treaty which was actually signed on board one of the Imperial yachts, the only witness to the transaction being a Russian admiral who was called upon by his master, at the Kaiser's request, to append his signature to a document of the nature of which he was left in ignorance. The articles of the Bjorkö treaty have not been divulged; but we know from subsequent telegrams of the German Emperor, published in the *New York Herald*, and from the recent disclosures of Mr. Isvolski in the *Temps*, that the alliance was expressly directed against England, and that it provided for the conversion of the Baltic Sea into a *mare clausum*, and for the seizure and occupation of Denmark by Russia and Germany in the event of the high contracting parties embarking upon a war against Great Britain. . . .

"The subsequent history of the Bjorkö intrigue is almost farcical. The Russo-German alliance, which it had taken the Kaiser the best part of a year to negotiate, remained operative for little more than a month. On his return to Tsarskoye Selo the Tsar communicated the terms of the treaty to his Foreign Minister Count Lamsdorf, who, we are told, 'could not believe his eyes or ears,' and who at once informed the Russian Ambassador at Paris of his master's indiscretion. Upon the latter's report that it would be impossible to get France to come into the agreement, Nicholas II seems to have been brought to realise the folly and impropriety of his act, and early in September the German Government was instructed that the Treaty of Bjorkö must be regarded as null and void on the ground that an essential clause, the adhesion of France, could not be carried out.

"The chagrin of the Kaiser on receiving this

intimation can be pictured, and it found expression in his telegram to the Tsar on 29 September, 1905. This message abounds in abuse of the Tsar's ally, although the Kaiser's persistent will to include France in the Russo-German combination appears to have undergone no diminution. The Treaty of Bjorkö, he tells the Tsar, 'does not come into collision with the Franco-Russian Alliance, provided of course, the latter is not aimed directly at my country. On the other hand, the obligations of Russia towards France can only go as far as France merits them through her behaviour. Your Ally notoriously left you in the lurch during the whole war, whereas Germany helped you in every way as far as it could without infringing the laws of neutrality.'

"The Pact of Bjorkö was still-born; but the story of its negotiation is of more than merely antiquarian interest, for it illustrates the characters of the autocrats of Potsdam and Petro-

grad and thereby throws light upon the causes and responsibilities for the present war. Nothing in the picture thus revealed is more arresting than the almost hypnotic influence which the Kaiser is shown to have exercised over the weak-willed and impressionable Tsar. The feeble 'Nicky' appears as wax in the hands of the masterful 'Willy,' who exploits the indecision of his brother ruler until he succeeds in cajoling him, perhaps not for the first time—certainly not for the last time—into subordinating the interests of Russia to those of Germany."

In his telegram to the Tsar, dated July 29, 1905, the Kaiser is revealed as an unscrupulous hypocrite. He advised Tsar Nicholas to do in 1905 what he refuses to allow his own people to do in 1917 in this war.

From the correspondence between the Kaiser and the Tsar it is perfectly clear that

what happened to Belgium during this war was to happen to Denmark and would have happened to that country if the Kaiser's plot to attack England had been carried out when he formed the secret alliance with Russia.

The Kaiser conferred with the King of Denmark for the purpose of acquainting him with this scheme. He intended to break the news gently to the King, whose country was to be violated by Germany and Russia. The Kaiser's pretext for such a step was thus explained in his characteristic telegram to Nicholas:— "The Danes expect that Russia and Germany will immediately take steps to safeguard their interests by laying hands on Denmark and occupying it during the war."

In this report to Nicholas the Kaiser bared his true character. He described how well he was received at the Danish Court and how the press had created an atmosphere of apprehen-

sion in connection with his stay, which caused him to change his scheme of acquainting the King with his project.

The Kaiser's indignation was aroused because he had learned that the British Minister in Denmark had used violent language against him, accusing him of the vilest intrigues. The imperial actor described how he met this situation under such embarrassing circumstances. He wrote:—"I did all in my power to dispel the cloud of distrust by behaving quite unconcernedly and making no allusion to serious politics at all."

Then he boastfully informed the Tsar how he succeeded in learning from a conversation with M. Izvolsky that in the event of war Denmark expected to be treated as they had arranged. To justify the change of his decision to discuss this matter with the King he telegraphed:—"The Danes are slowly resigning themselves to this alternative and making up

their minds accordingly. . . . It is better to let the idea develop and ripen in their heads and let them draw final conclusions themselves."

After this lesson in the intricacies of diplomacy and the whimsicalities of imperial psychology, the Kaiser wound up his report with a new thrust at Russia's allies:—"What do you say to the programme of festivities for your allies at Cowes?" he asked. "Very delicate, indeed. It shows I was right when I warned you two years ago."

This remarkable report by the Kaiser elicited only a few lines from his capricious pupil and accomplice. Nicholas thanked him for the "interesting details" and approved his methods, saying, "You were quite right in not letting anything be known about our alliance."

For sheer hypocrisy the Kaiser's telegram of August 7, 1905, has rarely been surpassed.

The war lord, who "watched everywhere," who toyed with the fate of the German and the Russian people in secret, who did not consult his Cabinet or Reichstag concerning matters of the gravest import, who conspired against the peace of the world, suddenly preached a sermon to Nicholas on the "great Duma," the voice of the people, urging him to let the representatives of the people decide the question of war or peace in order to save Nicholas and the throne.

Nicholas was irritated by the Kaiser's reference to the "great Duma" and the voice of the people.

Tsar Nicholas, whose reign was marked with bloodshed from the very day he ascended the throne in Moscow, in his reply to the Kaiser said, "You know how I hate bloodshed," and then assured him that he did not need the voice of the people to express itself in the matter of war or peace, that he was ready to take the

whole responsibility himself, adding that his conscience was clear.

When the Russo-Japanese war ended, the Tsar suddenly realized that it would be better to acquaint France with the secret treaty between Germany and Russia. He feared that the circumstances under which the treaty had been signed might arouse criticism in France, and he expressed his views on this subject to the Kaiser. Wilhelm immediately changed his tactics and assured Nicholas that the treaty signed at Bjorkö did not clash with the Franco-Russian alliance, provided the latter was not aimed at his country. He again tried to arouse the Tsar's anger against France by declaring, "Your ally has notoriously left you in the lurch during the whole war, whereas Germany helped you in every way. . . . That puts Russia morally also under obligations to us—do ut des."

He informed the Tsar that "the indiscre-

tions of Delcassé have shown the world that though France is your ally she nevertheless made an agreement with England and was on the verge of surprising Germany, with British help, in the middle of peace, while I was doing my best to you and your country, her ally."

Having made this point, the Kaiser reiterated that the secret treaty they had made was a very good base to build upon, and appealed to the Tsar's religious sentiments thus:—"We joined hands and signed before God, who heard our vows. I therefore think that the treaty can well come into existence."

If, however, the Tsar wanted any changes made in the words or clauses or provisions, the Kaiser now expressed his readiness to await any proposals Nicholas would see fit to lay before him. Until the changes had been made, the Kaiser insisted that the treaty must be adhered to.

While discussing the treaty the Kaiser rebuked the Tsar because the "influential press" in Russia had become "violently anti-German and pro-British," and declared that these organs had been "bought by heavy sums of British money, no doubt."

He reminded the Tsar that this attitude of the press caused irritation between Germany and Russia, that the "times are troubled and that we must have clear courses to steer; the treaty we signed is a means of keeping straight without interfering with your alliance as such." Then in the same telegram he once more played upon the Tsar's religious feelings, concluding, "What is signed is signed, and God is our testator."

The master intriguer, noticing that his hold on Nicholas was weakening, resorted to Tartuffian methods to influence the weakling by reminding him that God was their testator at the signing of the secret treaty which was

really intended to upset the equilibrium of Europe in order that the Kaiser might be able to readjust it according to his own whims and caprices.

Soon afterward the Kaiser addressed a telegram to the Tsar in which he expressed his indignation at England, calling King Edward "the arch mischiefmaker of Europe."

He wrote that he learned the Russian Ambassador Benkendorff had been sent on a secret mission to the Russian Dowager Empress with instructions to win her over to influence Nicholas against him, and that while the Foreign Office in London knew this, the Russian Embassy denied it. He added, "It is peculiar that your Ambassador should lend himself to such tricks."

The Tsar, in reply, defended Benkendorff, assuring the Kaiser that he had gone to the Dowager Empress at her own request and with the Tsar's permission. The capri-

cious pupil of Tsarskoye Selo who apparently profited by the lessons of his Potsdam instructor suddenly mustered courage to tell him that nothing could influence him except the honour and interest of his country; that Benkendorff was a loyal subject and a real gentleman and would not lend himself "to any false tricks, even if they came from the great mischiefmaker himself."

The correspondence between the Emperors then became less friendly. The Kaiser indicated in his telegram of November 26 that the Tsar's information with regard to Morocco was incorrect. Nevertheless, he availed himself once more of the opportunity of warning the Tsar against the demonstration projected by France and England against Turkey, and hinted at an uprising by the Islamitic world.

"The work of the 'Crimean combine' (the Franco-British entente) is to be detected here." In this note he even failed to send his

customary love message to Alice, the Empress of Russia.

The Kaiser revealed himself in his own correspondence as playing the rôle of intriguer and tempter, hypocrite and cynic, actor, preacher, gossip and fantastic military expert. In dealing with Nicholas he flattered him and preached to him, counselled him and warned him; he also threatened and bullied him when the other methods proved ineffective.

When the characterless and capricious ruler of the Russian people fell under the sway of other influences and the Kaiser saw his plot against England doomed to failure he changed his tactics sharply and practically turned the tables on his friend Nicholas.

On August 16, 1906, he informed him that "Uncle Bertie's visit passed off most satisfactorily." Uncle Bertie was King Edward. Then the Kaiser, who had plotted against England, employing every means to ensnare Rus-

sia and force France into signing the secret compact directed against England, suddenly, without any explanations, told the Tsar concerning his meeting with King Edward:—"We both agreed that the maintenance of friendly relations between our two countries is not only a blessing for them, but also for all the nations."

And Nicholas, who had fumed and raged against England's "arrogance and insolence" but a little while before, replying to the Kaiser's telegram, repeated parrotlike:—"The maintenance of friendly relations between Germany and England is an absolute necessity for the world."

In the meantime, Nicholas was confronted with internal difficulties, and he notified the Kaiser that he was compelled to postpone the interview with him because he had decided "to disband the Duma."

In the last telegram in our possession, dated

August 2, 1907, the Kaiser wrote once more of his meeting with "Uncle Bertie," who was "peacefully disposed." What the Kaiser, who had urged Nicholas to recognise the Duma as the voice of the people, thought of the dissolution of the Duma is most characteristic. He wrote: "When asked by the King about the actual state of Russia I was happy to inform him that I heard from you that all went well, the dismissal of the Duma by you being the same act as the dismissal of the Portuguese Parliament by his cousin Carlos."

At the time of the writing of that message neither the Tsar nor the Kaiser knew that the "dismissal" of the Duma would within ten years end the rule of the Romanoffs.

The correspondence between the Emperors opens the eyes of the world to the great evil of autocracy. In the light of these telegrams it becomes perfectly clear that the plotting and scheming of autocrats to divide the world and

determine policies affecting the lives and happiness of millions of human beings cannot be tolerated any longer. The world must really be made safe for democracy and lasting peace based upon justice, liberty and equality.

The secret correspondence between Wilhelm Hohenzollern and Nicholas Romanoff justifies most effectively President Wilson's following interpretation of the struggle against Kaiserism, in his masterly reply to Pope Benedict's peace proposal:

"The object of this war is to deliver the free peoples of the world from the menace and the actual power of a vast military establishment controlled by an irresponsible Government, which, having secretly planned to dominate the world, proceeded to carry the plan out without regard either to the sacred obligations of treaty or the long established practices and long cherished principles of international action and honour; which chose its own time for the war,

delivered its blow fiercely and suddenly, stopped at no barrier, either of law or of mercy; swept a whole continent within the tide of blood—not the blood of soldiers only, but the blood of innocent women and children also and of the helpless poor—and now stands balked but not defeated, the enemy of four-fifths of the world.

"This power is not the German people. It is the ruthless master of the German people."

THE WILLY–NICKY TELEGRAMS

THE WILLY–NICKY TELEGRAMS

1

From Kiel, the 16th of June, 1904.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur:

Uncle Albert's visit going, of course, well. He is very lively and active and most kind. His wish for peace is quite pronounced, and is the motive for his liking to offer his services wherever he sees collisions in the world. The weather is simply disgusting. Best love to Alice. Sympathise sincerely with your fresh losses of ships and men.

(Signed) WILLY, A. of A.

[*In the very first telegram the Kaiser made an admission most damaging to the claims of German Anglophobes. Throughout the pres-*

ent world-war and for many years preceding it, the pan-Germans have been accusing England of plotting the ruin of the Fatherland by means of a policy of encirclement (Umkreisungspolitik), by surrounding her with a ring of foes. The inventor and originator of this policy was supposed to have been King Edward VII. It was he, who as "joint conspirator" with Theophile Delcassé, was held responsible for the series of agreements between France and England in 1904 which settled all outstanding controversies between the two countries and resulted in the entente cordiale. An understanding between France and England could have been inspired only by motives of hostility to Germany, according to the German jingoes who regarded a permanent Franco-British rivalry as a vested German interest. But here we are assured, by "God's anointed" himself, that Edward's "wish for peace is quite pronounced" although he tried to frighten the

Tsar with the English King's wish for peace: It "is the motive for his liking to offer his services wherever he sees collisions in the world," and he may yet try to spoil your little war with Japan!]

2

From Nordfjordeidet, the 20th of June, 1904.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Péterhof:

Condole with you at death of Count Keller, a brave soldier and gentleman. Have communicated date fixed by you to my brother-in-law. He will, of course, report himself to you. Perhaps my cousin of Hohenzollern will watch the Japan troops on their side. We have fine weather here. Best love to Alice.

(Signed) WILLY.

3

From Peterhof, the 21st of June, 1904.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur d'Allemagne,

Nordfjordeidet:

Thank you for your condolence. Saw Mr. Witte, who reported the conclusion of the treaty with Count Bülow. Hope you are enjoying your cruise. Have inspected all the troops of the First Army Corps. Best love from both.

(Signed) NICKY.

4

From Molde, the 5th of July, 1904.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur:

A Russian steamer, calling itself a cruiser, *Smolensk* has stopped the German Lloyd's steamer *Prince Henry* and carried off the whole of the post bags containing correspond-

ence to Japan. This act, a violation of international law, will create great surprise and disgust in Germany, considering the friendly feeling shown to Russia by our country, and, if repeated, will, I fear, contribute to considerably reduce the sympathy still cherished for your country by Germany.

(Signed) WILLY.

5

From Peterhof, the 7th of July, 1904.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Berlin:

Excuse me for answering so late, but having come back from an inspection of the 22d division I had no time to write sooner. I regret this excess and trope de zele of the *Smolensk*. Measures shall be taken to prevent similar cases occurring. Would be too sad if one episode were to spoil the excellent rela-

tions existing between our countries. I took your aide de camp, Count Lamsdorff, with me. Your Wiborg regiment presented itself very well. I told them I was sure they would show themselves worthy of their colonel in chief.

(Signed) NICKY.

6

From Drondheim, Hohenzollern,
The 8th (21st) of July, 1904.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Péterhof:

Best thanks. Quite satisfied. Hope my regiment wilful to behave well. Best love to Alice.

(Signed) WILLY.

7

From Drondheim,
The 10th (23rd) of July, 1904.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Péterhof:

I have just heard from Hamburg line that Russian "cruiser" has carried off their steamer *Scandia* under Russian officers and crew to unknown destination. This act is an open violation of international sea law and is nearly adequate to piracy. I think it high time that the captains of the so-called cruisers should receive instructions warning them to refrain from committing such acts as the above, as they are able to bring about international complications.

(Signed) WILHELM.

8

From Péterhof, the 11th (24th) of July, 1904.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Drondheim:

Orders have already been given to captains to refrain from stopping ships, but it is not easy to transmit them instructions while they cruise about. Steamer *Scandia* shall be immediately released on her arrival at first port. During this war we learned that enormous quantities of contrabrand were being shipped from Europe to Japan. Naturally, out of a feeling of self-defence, we wanted to put a stop to it. I hope you will see from this that there was not the slightest idea in Russia of provoking any bitter feeling in Germany. Once more I regret very much what has happened.

(Signed) NICKY.

9

From Drondheim,
The 11th (24th) of July, 1904,
At 8 o'clock 20 m., evening.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Péterhof:

Sincerest thanks. News of the release of *Scandia* will eminently help to relieve feeling of concern and anxiety which was settling on the country, especially on the commercial part of Germany. May you soon have good news from the front. Best love to Alice. Very cold weather here.

(Signed) WILLY.

10

From Hubertustock, the 8th of October
(25th of September), 1904,
At 6 o'clock 25 m., afternoon.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Réval:

The colonel of my Wiborg regiment telegraphed to me the fact of your kind acknowledgment of their bravery by the despatch of a large number of decorations. As chief I venture to thank you heartily for this act and to express my pleasure at the valiant behaviour of the Wiborgs. I see by the papers that the fleet are for target practice at the well known ranges near Réval, where we passed such delightful days. I hope they will learn their duty soundly and introduce telescopic sights, which the Japanese have on their guns, but were wanting in the Port Arthur fleet. I suppose that when the ice sets in the fleet will establish their base at Libau or near Danish

coast, in the Kicege Bay, for instance, for their steam tactics and squadron drill, which is a very practical place in winter. So that when the spring comes they will be ready for the march to the East, knowing their leader, their ships and their guns, and then re-establish the Russian supremacy on the sea. I am, as every man in my country is, full of enthusiastic admiration at brave Stoessel, his gallant garrison; may God help them to hold out. The vessels in the harbour are, of course, the main attraction for the Japanese. I hope they will make a try for the Japanese fleet, and if they manage to run down or smash or damage the four lines of battleships left to Japan, though they themselves may perish, too, they will have done their duty, shattering the strength of the Japanese sea power and preparing the way for the Baltic fleet's victorious success on its arrival, in winning easily against a damaged antagonist unable to repair his ships

or build new ones in time. Then the sea power is back in your hands and the Japanese land forces are at your mercy; then you sound the "general advance" for your army and the enemy. Hallali! Schebecko just brought your letter when I was finishing my telegram. Many hearty thanks. I have already given every order that Hamburg-American line is in no way to be hampered, but has free scope to do what they like. It is very sensible to keep the squadron here till the ships are thoroughly "seasoned" and till all units are ready to go out together. There is no doubt that the appearance of a strong, fresh fleet, with many numbers—though some may be older ships—will do well and decide the day in your favour; the main point is that the ships in Port Arthur must make for the Japanese and try to sink, ram or damage as many ships as they can, so as to prepare the ground for the Baltic fleet, which on arrival will only have to finish the

rest of the hostile ships off. Also I think it would be practical for you to begin ordering line of battleships to be built, with private firms, as the Japanese have done in England. So that when in a year or two the negotiations for peace begin you can dispose of a fresh reserve to impose your will and make yourself independent of foreign intervention. Best love to Alice.

(Signed) WILLY.

[*It is difficult to say whether the Kaiser was in earnest or whether he was deliberately deceiving the Tsar by his fantastic advice that the bottled-up Russian fleet at Port Arthur attack the Japanese fleet and, though it be destroyed while doing it, it would so weaken the enemy that it would prepare the way for the Baltic fleet's "victorious success" and "win easily against a damaged antagonist." "Then," the Kaiser goes on, "the sea power is back in your*

hands and the Japanese land forces are at your mercy; then you sound the 'general advance' for your army—and the enemy—Hallali!" Even while Willy was encouraging Nicky to sally forth from Port Arthur and to send his Baltic fleet to destruction, he was urging him to "begin ordering a line of battleships to be built, with private firms," that is to say, in Germany. The "divine right" Prussian, the tireless plotter and intriguer against the world's peace, the would-be world conqueror, here revealed himself as a commonplace salesman trying to obtain orders for the iron works at Essen and the shipyards at Stettin. The mediæval survival in "shining armour" turned out an ultra-modern profiteer!]

11

From Neues Palais,
The 8th (19th) of October, 1904.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Tzarskoé, Sélo:

I have information from good source that former Japanese Minister at Petersburg, Kurino, has reappeared in Europe. He is in Paris, and seems to be authorised to try to get France and England l'entente cordiale to mediate in favour of Japan for peace. It seems also as if the Chinese were being pushed forward by Japan to offer to mediate on their part, too. This shows that Japan is nearing the limits of its strength in men and money, and now that they have gained advantages over the Manchurian army they fancy that they can stop now and try to reap the fruits of their efforts by enticing other Powers to mix themselves in the matter and to get at Manchuria by peace con-

ference. As I know your ideas on the further development of the war, and that after a severe reverse you will, of course, never lend a hand to such a proceeding, I thought it my duty to inform you of what seems going on behind the scenes. I think the strings of all these doings lead across the Channel.

(Signed) WILLY.

[*Throughout this correspondence the astute Wilhelm was encouraging the simple-minded Tsar to fight Japan to the bitter end. Thereby he hoped to kill two birds with one stone (and that stone not his own), to weaken two powerful rival empires. A weakened Japan would be unable to hinder the development of German imperialist ambitions in the Far East, and a weakened Russia would have to submit quietly to German and Austrian aggressions in the Balkans and the Near East. In fact, Russia was encouraged in every possible way to em-*

bark upon her hare-brained Far Eastern adventure in order to weaken her position in Europe. She was encouraged to denude her Polish fortresses of their garrisons by the promise that nothing inimical would be undertaken against her by Germany and her Austrian ally. This promise did not, however, prevent Wilhelm's ally from annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina early in 1908, while the Russian army was still broken down and demoralised from the joint effects of the disastrous war against Japan and domestic revolution.

To understand the full import of the Kaiser's reiterated advice to his feeble-minded protégé in Tsarskoe Selo concerning the war with Japan, and in general concerning foreign affairs, it is necessary always to bear in mind the cardinal principle of German diplomacy during the reign of Wilhelm II in relation to Russia. According to this principle, Russia is the great menace, the dark cloud that hangs over Ger-

many's future. But for Russia, France, with a population almost half as large as Germany's, could be easily overrun and conquered. But for Russia, all the resources of western Europe could be combined into the hands of the Hohenzollerns for an irresistible onslaught upon the British empire and the establishment of German world-supremacy. It is because of this dread of Russia and her mighty possibilities under an enlightened and liberal government that, ever since the outbreak of the Great War, German diplomacy and German intrigue have been aiming, on the one hand, at cutting off Russia's outlying provinces—Poland, Lithuania, the Baltic provinces, Ukrainia, Bessarabia, the Caucasus—not to mention Finland—and on the other hand at stimulating all possible internal elements of confusion and disintegration. It is because the Pan-Germans have always regarded Russia with dread, as the greatest obstacle to the realisation of their

ambitions for world conquest, that they have always insisted upon the Asiatic character of Russia. According to the Pan-Germans, Russia is not, and ought not to be, a European power. Russia must be, or be forced to become, a purely Asiatic power. For such is the interest of Germany. As an Asiatic power Russia would be clashing constantly with the British empire and Japan, and would thus become a tool of German ambition, instead of being a hindrance and a menace.

This was the arch design of German diplomacy in relation to Russia. But in the meantime, before the realisation of this principle and while Russia still remained a great European power, it was necessary to sow in Russian minds suspicion and distrust of France, of Japan, and above all of England—in short of all the nations that stood in the way of German ambitions. This the Kaiser was constantly striving to do in his correspondence

with the Tsar. This is also what all the German agents are trying to accomplish in Russia now, during the Great War. And now that the United States, too, has been forced to take up arms against the German militarist autocracy, the German agents in Russia are also trying to instil suspicion, distrust and hatred of "capitalistic" America into the simple minds of the Russian masses.]

12

From Tzarskoe Selo,
The 10th of October, 1904.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Neues Palais:

Having been out shooting I could not answer your interesting telegram earlier. Many thanks for the information about Japan's activity in some European countries. I heard about it also, but I cannot quite make out

whether the strings of these doings lead across the Channel, or perhaps the Atlantic. You may be sure that Russia shall fight this war to the end, until the last Jap is driven out of Manchuria. Only then can come the talk about peace negotiations, and that solely between the two belligerents. May God help us. Hearty thanks for your loyal friendship, which I trust beyond anything.

(Signed) NICKY.

[*Perhaps Nicky was not so simple-minded after all. To Willy's "I think the strings of all these doings lead across the channel"—England, always England, as the arch foe—Nicky replied that he "cannot quite make out whether the strings lead across the channel, or perhaps the Atlantic." Subsequent events showed the latter surmise to have been not without shrewdness.*]

13

From Neues Palais,
The 14th (27th) of October, 1904,
at 4 o'clock 28 m., night.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Tzarskoé, Sélo:

For some time English press has been threatening Germany on no account to allow coals to be sent to Baltic fleet now on its way out. It is not impossible that the Japanese and British governments may lodge a joint protest against our coaling your ships, coupled with a "summation" to stop further work. The result aimed at by such a threat of war would be the absolute immobility of your fleet and inability to proceed to its destination from want of fuel. This new danger would have to be faced in community by Russia and Germany together, who would both have to remind your ally, France, of obligations she has taken over in the treaty of dual alliance with you, the

"casus foederis." It is out of the question that France, on such an invitation, would try to shirk her implicit duty toward her ally. Though Delcassé is an anglophile "enragé," he will be wise enough to understand that the British fleet is utterly unable to save Paris. In this way a powerful combination of three of the strongest Continent Powers would be formed, to attack whom the Anglo-Japanese group would think twice before acting. The plaints of England against our coaling Russian ships are all the more frivol, as England since the beginning of the war—after making a present of two ironclads, *Nishin* and *Kassuga*, under British officers and crews, to Japan—has constantly supplied the Japanese fleet with their coals, selling them no less than thirty steamers. The naval battles fought by Togo are fought with Cardiff coals. It would, of course, be much more agreeable for us if the British were wise, and, remembering all this,

left us alone and in peace. But never will I for a moment recede before unjust threat. I am sorry for the mishap in the North Sea. If the fleet are afraid of night attacks I think the use of searchlights alone would suffice to guard the ships from being surprised if all the lights are turned on the sectors outside the fleet. The use of guns, especially in European waters, should be restricted as much as possible. My news from London says that the press and mob make a noise, the Admiralty some fuss, but that government, court and society look with greatest calm at the event as an unhappiness arising from the great nervousness. I have sure news from Italy that the Terni shipbuilding trust (Terni, Odero, Orlando) are building three surfeit seagoing ironclads of 12,000 tons each for a foreign unnamed Power, probably Japan; reminds me of my former suggestion that you ought not to forget to order new ships of the line also, so

as to be ready with some of them when war is over. They will be excellent "persuaders" during the peace negotiations. Our private firms would be most glad to receive contracts. I have attached Lamsdorff to your suite and person, as you kindly did with Schebeko for me. I am deeply sensible for your kind appreciation of my action toward you and Russia, and assure you can always rely on my absolute faithful loyalty. Best love to Alice.

(Signed) WILLY.

[*In September, 1904, the Baltic fleet, under Admiral Rojestvensky, left Kronstadt for the Far East to meet the Japanese warships blockading Port Arthur, where the Russian Asiatic fleet was bottled up. After coaling in Danish waters, they passed the Great Belt and proceeded down the North Sea. On the night of October 21, when over the Dogger Banks, off the northern coast of England, the*

fleet, mistaking a large number of fishing trawlers for Japanese torpedo boats, fired on the latter, sinking a trawler, killing two men, injuring the rest of the crew and damaging three other trawlers. The affair brought Russia and Great Britain to the verge of war. The matter was finally referred to a commission of inquiry composed of five officers, among them Rear Admiral Davis, who reported on February 25, 1905, holding Admiral Rojestvensky responsible for the firing and its results, though it absolved him and his squadron from discredit either to their military qualities or their humanity. The affair ended in an indemnity being paid by the Russian government to the victims and the families of those killed.

This telegram presents in striking combination the Prussian plotter's sycophancy, insolence and baseness. He would so much have liked to furnish coal to the Baltic fleet on its

voyage to destruction, but was afraid of the English press. He imagined a British-Japanese protest, and insinuated that France would surely be faithless to her ally. To ingratiate himself with Nicky he uttered threats against Paris, and in the same breath retailed rumours of Japanese ships being built in Italy and renewed his former suggestion that the Tsar order battleships in Germany: "Our private firms would be most glad to receive contracts!" Timur Tamerlane chasing after commissions!]

14

From Tzarskoe Selo,
The 16th (28th) of October, 1904.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Neues Palais:

Your telegram comes at a very serious moment. I thank you heartily for it. Of course, you know the first details of North Sea incident from our admiral's telegram. Natur-

ally it changes completely the character of the event. I have no words to express my indignation with England's conduct. It seems that the Continental Powers in similar cases have to confront the danger of her public opinion overwhelming a more reasonable attitude of her government. The latter has to follow the wishes of the country, makes risky steps and sends thundering notes with quite unacceptable conditions. That is the consequence of acting on the spur of the moment. To-day I ordered Lamsdorff to send to my London Ambassador a proposition to subject the whole question to an international commission of inquiry as laid down in The Hague Conference protocol. I agree fully with your complaints about England's behaviour concerning the coaling of our ships by German steamers, whereas she understands the rules of keeping neutrality in her own fashion. It is certainly high time to put a stop to this. The only way,

as you say, would be that Germany, Russia and France should at once unite upon an arrangement to abolish Anglo-Japanese arrogance and insolence. Would you like to lay down and frame the outlines of such a treaty and let me know it? As soon as accepted by us France is bound to join her ally. This combination has often come to my mind; it will mean peace and rest for the world. Best love from Alix.

(Signed) NICKY.

[*Weak-minded Nicky made an excellent hypnotic subject. He fell easily under the spell. In fact, the combination had often come to his mind. To crown his imbecility he believed that the plotter wanted to bring peace and rest to the world.*]

15

From Neues Palais,
The 17th (30th) of October, 1904,
At 9 o'clock, evening.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Tzarskoé Sélo:

Best thanks for telegram. Have sent letter, including draft of treaty you wished for, off by imperial fieldjaeger this evening. Heard from private source that Hull fishermen have already acknowledged that they have seen foreign steam craft among their boats, not belonging to their fishing fleet, which they knew not. So there has been foul play. I think the British Embassy in Petersburg must know this news, whereto are kept from the British public till now, for fear of "blamage." Best love to Alice.

(Signed) WILLY.

[*Willy lost no time. The draft of the treaty was ready and he sent it off in hot haste. To*

frighten Nicky into equal haste, he suggested "foul play" which was kept secret from the British public.]

16

From Neues Palais,
The 2d (15th) of November, 1904,
At 4 o'clock 33 min., afternoon.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Tzarskoé Sélo:

From reliable source in India I am secretly informed that expedition "à la Thibet" is being quickly prepared for Afghanistan. It is meant to bring that country for once and all under British influence, if possible direct suzerainty. The expedition is to leave end of this month. The only not English European in Afghanistan service, the director of the arms manufactory of the Emir, a German gentleman, has been murdered, as "préambule" to the action. The losses of the Japanese be-

fore Port Arthur are, according to my information, fifty thousand men; consequently they are beginning to get tired of the war, as they lose too many men. This has made them ask in Paris and London for mediation, and that is why these two Powers let their press renew the ventilation of the probabilities of their being able to mediate. Japan hopes to get Port Arthur and Manchuria from them, by help Congress. Am preparing answer to your kind letter, which I trust will meet your wishes. Best love to Alice.

(Signed) WILLY.

17

From Neues Palais,
The 6th (19th) of November, 1904,
At 10 o'clock 33 min., morning.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Tzarskoé Sélo:

Lamsdorff leaves to-night with letter. My statements about India in last telegram are

corroborated by the speech of Lord Selborne, who alluded to Afghanistan question. I hear from trustworthy private source that authorities in Tokio are getting anxious at the future outlook of the war. They have expressed their mortification at not having gained a real success at Liaoyang, considering enormous loss of men, because they were without any fresh reserves. The steady pouring in of fresh battalions from Russia is quite far beyond their expectations, as they never thought the Siberian Railway capable of keeping up the transports unremittingly. They begin to see in consequence that, though they are at an end with their cadres, and especially officers, your army is daily increasing in strength, men and striking power, and that the scales of war are slowly but surely turning against them. A Japanese general went so far to say:—"The soup we have cooked we must now eat it up." My suspicions, accordingly, that the Japanese

are trying secretly to get other Powers to mediate because they are now at the height of their successes have proved correct. Lansdowne has asked Hayashi to intimate to England the conditions upon which Japan would conclude peace. They were telegraphed from Tokio, but were so preposterous that even blustering Lansdowne thought them too strong and urged Hayashi to tone them down. When they made a wry face and difficulties Lansdowne added: "Of course, England will take good care that a mediæval Russia will be kept well out of Manchuria, Korea, &c., so that de facto Japan will get all she wants." That is the point the British have in their eye when they speak of friendship and friendly mediation. France, as I hear from Japan, is already informed of these plans, and, of course, a party to this arrangement, taking, as usual in the new "entente cordiale," the side of England. They are going to offer you a bit of Persia as

compensation, of course far from the shore of the Gulf—Ca va sans dire—which England means to annex herself, fearing you might get access to the warm sea, which you must by right, as Persia is bound to fall under Russian control and government. This would give either a splendid commercial opening, which England wants to debar you from. Probably your diplomatists will have reported all this to you before, but I thought, nevertheless, it my duty to inform you of all I knew, all of which are authentic serious news from absolutely trustworthy sources. Lansdowne's words are authentic too. So you see the future for your army is brightened up and soon you will be able to turn tables upon the enemy. May God grant you full success, while I continue to watch everywhere for you. Best love to Alice.

(Signed) WILLY.

[*Nicky apparently was hesitating, so he was to be frightened with a new bogey—a British*

expedition into Afghanistan. At the same time Britain was pictured as plotting to save Japan from the consequences of the war, while France, Russia's ally, was betraying Nicholas.]

18

From Tzarskoe Selo,
The 7th (20th) of November, 1904,
At 7 o'clock 50 min., evening.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Neues Palais:

Count Lamsdorff brought me to-day your very kind and most interesting letter. Accept my heartiest thanks also for your telegram of yesterday, which brought me much information. In a very few days I will send you my answer, and I hope this affair shall be settled soon to our mutual benefit. Alix sends you best love.

(Signed) NICKY.

19

From Tzarskoe Selo,
The 10th (23d) of November, 1904,
At 12 o'clock 30 min., day.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Neues Palais:

Before signing the last draft of treaty I think it advisable to let the French see it. As long as it is not signed one can make small modifications in the text, whereas if already approved by us both it will seem as if we tried to enforce the treaty on France. In this case a failure might easily happen, which, I think, is neither your wish. Therefore I ask your agreement to acquaint the government of France with this project and upon getting their answer shall at once let you know by telegraph.

(Signed) NICKY.

20

From Tzarskoe Selo,
The 10th (23d) of November, 1904,
At 12 o'clock 30 m., A. P.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Neues Palais:

Hearing that the Emperor of Austria has written to you about an arrangement signed between Russia and Austria, I think it my duty to inform you also from my side. Wishing to strengthen our efforts in keeping peace and tranquillity in the Balkan affairs according to the agreement of 1897, the Emperor and I resolved to sign a secret declaration for the observation of a loyal and strict neutrality in case one of the Empires should be in a state of war, alone and without provocation on its part, with a third country, the latter wishing to endanger the existing status quo. Naturally this declaration does not concern any small Balkan country, and it will last as long as Rus-

sia and Austria continue their policy of peace in Southeastern Europe. Knowing your efforts for preserving general peace, I am sure this agreement shall meet your sympathy and kind consideration.

(Signed) NICKY.

21

From Moschen b. Kujau,
The 13th (26th) of November, 1904,
At 9 o'clock 33 m., morn.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Tzarskoé Sélo:

Best thanks for telegram. You have given me a new proof of your perfect loyalty by deciding not to inform France without my agreement. Nevertheless, it is my firm conviction that it would be absolutely dangerous to inform France before we both have signed the treaty. It would have an effect diametrically opposed to our wishes. It is only the absolute sure

knowledge that we are both bound by treaty to lend each other mutual help that will bring the French to press upon England to remain quiet and keep the peace for fear of France's position being jeopardized. Should, however, France know that a Russian-German treaty is only projected, but still unsigned, she will immediately give short notice to her friend (if not secret ally) England, with whom she is bound by "entente cordiale," and inform her immediately. The outcome of such information would doubtless be an instantaneous attack by the two allied Powers, England and Japan, on Germany in Europe as well as in Asia. Their enormous maritime superiority would soon make short work of my small fleet and Germany would be temporarily crippled. This would upset the scales of the equilibrium of the world to our mutual harm, and, later on, when you begin your peace negotiations, throw you alone on the tender mercies of Japan and

her jubilant and overwhelming friends. It was my special wish—and, as I understand, your intention, too—to maintain and strengthen this endangered equilibrium of the world through expressly the agreement between Russia, Germany and France. That is only possible if our treaty becomes a fact before, and if we are perfectly d'accord under any form. A previous information of France will lead to a catastrophe. Should you, notwithstanding, think it impossible for you to conclude a treaty with me without the previous consent of France, then it would be a far safer alternative to abstain from concluding any treaty at all. Of course, I shall be as absolutely silent about our pourparlers as you will be; in the same manner as you have only informed Lamsdorff, so I have only spoken to Bülow, who guaranteed absolute secrecy. Our mutual relations and feelings would remain unchanged as before, and I shall go on

trying to make myself useful to you as far as my safety will permit. Your agreement of neutrality was communicated to me by the Emperor of Austria, and I thank you for your telegram doing the same. I think it very sensible and it has my fullest approval. Best love.

(Signed) WILLY.

[*In telegram No. 19 poor Nicky showed a spark of reason, no doubt due to representations of Count Lamsdorff, his Minister of Foreign Affairs. He would like to let the French see the draft of the treaty before he signed it. He would even have them suggest small modifications in the text. In any case, he did not wish it to appear as though he were trying to force the treaty upon the French. But the plotter refused to yield an inch. It must be a plot or nothing at all, a secret treaty or no treaty. And he overwhelmed poor Nicky with*

visions of dire catastrophe and upset of the world's equilibrium, to England's advantage and "our mutual harm."]

22

From Tzarskoe Selo,
The 15th (28th) of November, 1904,
At 10 o'clock, night.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Neues Palais:

Best thanks for telegram. In answer to it shall send you a letter with explanations on the matter. I think a letter is safer than having to cipher long telegrams, which may attract unnecessary attention. I remain strongly of opinion that we shall come soon to a complete conformity of views on this question, which interests us both so much. Best thanks for your frank and kind conversations with Schebeko that he reported to me.

(Signed) NICKY.

23

From Neues Palais, the 27th of
November (10th of December), 1904,
At 10 o'clock 22 min., evening.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Tzarskoé Sélo:

Your letter of the 7th, for which best thanks, has just crossed mine of same date. We must now before all come to a permanent agreement about coaling question. This question becomes daily more and more urgent. To-day again serious news has reached me from Port Said and Cape Town; there is now no time to be lost any more. No third Power must hear even a whisper about our intentions before we have concluded the convention about the coaling business; the consequences otherwise would be most dangerous. I, of course, place full reliance in your loyalty.

(Signed) WILLY.

[*In this telegram, as well as in the two that follow, there suddenly cropped up a coaling question. The Kaiser said that "the question becomes daily more and more urgent. . . . No third power must hear even a whisper about our intentions before we have concluded the convention about the coaling business; the consequences would be most dangerous." And he resorted to his usual stratagem of bewildering and frightening poor Nicky with vague, sinister rumours: "To-day again serious news has reached me from Port Said and Cape Town; There is no time to be lost any more." He accomplished his purpose. The very next day Nicky telegraphed back his complete agreement with his tormentor, and the following day he reported that he had ordered his Minister of Foreign Affairs to hand over a note to the German ambassador, declaring his complete acquiescence in Wilhelm's wishes concerning the coaling question.*

Is this "convention about the coaling business" which was practically concluded on December 12, 1904, identical with the secret treaty that the Kaiser had been urging upon the Tsar since October 27, 1904? Possibly. But the internal evidence of this correspondence strongly points to the conclusion that the coaling convention was a proposition subsidiary to the treaty. In telegram No. 23 the Kaiser himself wrote of "our intentions" (that is the larger and much more important treaty in contemplation) as distinct from the coaling question: "No third Power," he said, "must hear even a whisper about our intentions before we have concluded the convention about the coaling business." A mere coaling arrangement, whatever its character, would scarcely have such dangerous consequences as Wilhelm is bringing up before Nicky's mind. But there is further and much stronger evidence pointing in the same direction. The coaling convention

was practically concluded on December 12th. It is referred to again in the three subsequent despatches, from which it appears that the arrangement was not working to the Tsar's satisfaction. In other words, poor Nicky was fooled by his dear friend, who assured him of his "absolute faithful loyalty" and that he would "continue to watch everywhere" for him. On the other hand, there was no mention of the all-important treaty of alliance that was to force France into a continental combination against England until August 21, 1905, that is until after the meeting of Kaiser and Tsar at Bjorkö, which took place on July 23, 1905. The internal evidence of these telegrams leads to the conclusion that the coaling arrangement was distinct from the treaty of alliance, and that while the former was virtually concluded on December 12, 1904, the latter was not concluded until the Bjorkö meeting on July 23, 1905.

This conclusion is corroborated by Dr. E. J. Dillon, the famous correspondent of the London Daily Telegraph, concerning the secret treaty. He had been made aware of it, in 1905, but he was bound by a solemn promise not to breathe a word to any one before the death of one of two personages. After a lapse of some years he was unexpectedly authorised to inform the British government of what he knew, but when the authorised spokesman of that government learned the nature of the disclosures about to be made to him, he refused to listen to them. Why? Dr. Dillon does not say, but it is perfectly plain that by that time the entente between England and Russia was ripening and the authorised spokesman of the British government preferred to take no cognizance of past treacheries on the part of the Tsar for fear of endangering the friendly relations then forming. Dr. Dillon's words in reference to the secret treaty: "I had the melan-

choly privilege of reading it," are in themselves sufficient proof that this was no coaling arrangement.

Thus the "innocent" Bjoerkö meeting between Kaiser and Tsar assumes an added significance and interest as illustrating the dark and devious ways by which Wilhelm operated on the feeble mind of his victim.]

24

From Tzarskoe Selo, the 28th of
November (11th of December), 1904,
At 5 o'clock 5 min., A. M.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Neues Palais:

Hearty thanks for your letter. Fully agree that both our governments must now come to a permanent understanding upon coaling question. Lamsdorff was to see Alvensleben this morning. You may fully rely on my loyalty

and on my wish to arrive at a speedy settlement of this serious question.

NICKY.

25

From Tzarskoe Selo, the 29th of
November (12th of December), 1904,
At 7 o'clock 45 min., A. M.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Neues Palais:

I have ordered my Minister of Foreign Affairs to hand over to Count Alvensleben a note declaring my complete acquiescence to your wish concerning the coaling question. Happy to report this to you.

(Signed) NICKY.

26

Upon inquiring into the coaling business I learned that two agents of the Hamburg-America line are now in Petersburg to nego-

tiate about the sale of the coaling ships, but that your people refuse to buy, pretending that they have no spare crews to man the colliers. This cannot be true, and I suppose that the wish to have peace at any price is uppermost in the minds of the parties who plead impossibility. For surely a few hundred sailors, with officers and engineers to match, might be taken from the Black Sea squadron, which has got to remain inactive anyway, and sent directly by steamer through the Suez Canal to Madagascar. They might be installed on board of the colliers long before the 3d squadron arrives in Madagascar, for which Rojestvensky will have to wait anyway, if he would avoid defeat, the second squadron being inferior to the Japanese naval forces. It is lucky for you that the French have at all times, even against their own interests during the German war, maintained the point of naval law that belligerent vessels may remain in a neutral port for any

length of time and without disarming. Thus the French government are fully entitled to let the second squadron remain in Madagascar until the arrival of the 3d. The Russian crews for the colliers would therefore have ample time to reach Nossibe and to install themselves on board. The new manning of the colliers will give Rojestv. legitimate motive for staying in Nossibe until he is reinforced by the 3d squadron. If anybody were to advise you to let Rojest. attack the Japanese before the arrival of reinforcements you might ask that party whether he is ready to take upon himself the responsibility for the result.

WILLY.

[*The Kaiser sought by every artifice to make Nicky suspicious of France. Again and again he assured him that she would most certainly succumb to British machinations and leave her Russian ally in the lurch. What actually happened was precisely to the contrary. On the*

long and painful journey from the Baltic to Tsushima, Rojestvensky's fleet stopped at one French port after another, making more or less prolonged stays for the purpose of recoaling and refitting. So now Willy insinuated that the French really deserved no particular credit for their fidelity to the Russian alliance: If they have strained their neutrality in favour of Russia, it is only because they have always "maintained the point of naval law." Later on, however, the wily Willy had the effrontery to assert that "your ally has notoriously left you in the lurch during the whole war, whereas Germany helped you as far as it could without infringing the laws of neutrality."]

27

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Berlin:

Admiral Rojestvensky wired yesterday for the third time that two Hamburg-America line

coaling ships have not yet received orders from their company to follow further than Madagascar under German flag. The agreement concerning money guarantees against war risk has been settled with the company through Mendelsson bank, but the Hamburg-America Company fears to give orders before getting instructions from the Chancellor. Would you kindly give the necessary permission, without which the further sailing of the squadron becomes entirely impossible?

NICKY.

28

Berlin, 2 (15) Fevrier, 1905, 12 o'clock 55 m.

I told you with beginning of this coaling business that I should do nothing to prevent. I can give no instructions whatever with regard to it, because it is a private enterprise. The Hamburg-America line knows the situation

and must act on their own responsibility. From this point of view I have ordered now to let Ballin know once more by wire that as for myself and my government he is at liberty to act as he thinks fit—of course at his own risks.

WILLY.

[*Here again the Kaiser combined high politics with sordid business. On the one hand he urged the Tsar to buy colliers from the Hamburg-American Line and threw suspicions upon the motives of the Russian officials who, for whatever reason, were disinclined to make the purchase. On the other hand, he suggested the necessity for despatching a third squadron of warships to Rojestvensky, who otherwise would surely suffer defeat. That the German government expected Rojestvensky to be defeated in any case, with or without further reinforcements, is proven by the fact that the two Hamburg-American Line coaling ships refused to follow the Russian fleet, under the German*

flag, further than Madagascar. Nor would Willy yield to all of Nicky's entreaties. The coaling business had suddenly become a purely private business matter, with which he must not interfere. In other words, the Kaiser's advisers felt certain that the coaling ships would fall into the hands of the Japanese together with the entire fleet under Rojestvensky's command. Why then did Willy urge Nicky to risk his last ship in this mad, hazardous enterprise? Because the departure and destruction of the entire Russian Baltic fleet would leave the German navy supreme in the Baltic, in fact, without a rival for several years. And incidentally, Germany, and particularly the Kaiser's industrialist friends, would reap a fresh harvest of orders from Russia for the construction of an entirely new Baltic fleet to replace the one lost by Rojestvensky in Japanese waters.]

29

Sa Majesté l'Empereur d'Allemagne,

Berlin:

Micha came back to-day enchanted with your kindness and hospitality. He repeated to me everything you wished him to tell me. The day after your letter came the American Ambassador, Mr. Meyer, asked to see me. I received him yesterday. He was instructed by the President to lay the proposition which you had written to me about. I agreed on condition that the fullest secrecy be kept until Japan gave her consent to open with us preparatory negotiations. Of course, if her demands were unreasonable the discussion would be broken off. Best love from both.

NICKY.

30

Swedish port north of Stockholm.

I shall shortly be on my return journey and cannot pass across entrance of the Finnish Sea without sending you best love and wishes. Should it give you any pleasure to see me—either on shore or your yacht—of course am always at your disposal. I would come as simple tourist, without any fêtes.

WILLY.

[*Casually, as it were, friend Willy dropped a note to friend Nicky. He was going to pass by Nicky's front door, and wouldn't Nicky care to see him for just a minute? On the road, or in the front yard, it didn't matter which, but it would be such a joy, such a pleasure to the simple tourist, who wished to avoid all formality and ceremony. Just a friendly chat, that's all.*]

31

Sa Majesté l'Empereur d'Allemagne,

Hernoesand:

Delighted with your proposition. Would it suit you to meet at Bjoerkesund, near Viborg, a pleasant, quiet place, living on board our yachts? In these serious times I cannot go far from the capital. Of course, our meeting will be quite simple and homely. Looking forward with intense pleasure to see you.

NICKY.

[*And poor Nicky, who was having endless worries and troubles in those "serious times" of foreign war and domestic turmoil, was of course delighted at the idea. There remained only a few minor details to be arranged.*]

32

From Nyland,
The 7th (20th) of July, 1905,
At 1 o'clock 25 m., P. M.

Most happy. Would it suit you if I arrived at your anchorage—Bjoerkesund—on Sunday (10th), 23d, evening? My yacht draws six and a half metres water; would be thankful for a trustworthy pilot to lead us through the entrance. Please to communicate where you will anchor. Have kept the whole matter quite secret, so that my gentlemen on board even know nothing; also at home nobody informed. Am so delighted to be able to see you. Hope you will not be disturbed by my Nordland's Gesellschaft, who always accompany me since 15 years. Best love.

WILLY.

33

Sa Majesté l'Empereur d'Allemagne,

Nyland:

Shall be Sunday, 10th (23d), afternoon, at Bjoerkesund. Have given orders about trustworthy pilot. Place of anchorage will be between the islands of Bjoerke and Kavitza. Till now have kept our planned meeting secret. So happy to see you. Wish you a smooth passage. Best love.

NICKY.

34

From Nyland,
The 8th (21st) of July, 1905,
At 1 o'clock 26 m., P. M.

Most obliged. Expect to arrive on —rd (10th), at 7, evening. Please let pilot meet us off Hochland. Nobody has slightest idea of meeting; only my captain, who is ordered

to keep absolute secrecy. All my guests under impression of going to Visby, in Gothland. Am overjoyed at seeing you again. Have most important news for you. The faces of my guests will be worth seeing when they suddenly behold your yacht. A fine lark. Tableaux. Which dress for the meeting?

WILLY.

[*The Kaiser was playing the game skilfully, like a past master. The guests on his boat were kept in perfect ignorance of the innocent little escapade. The faces they will make when they behold the Russian imperial yacht—what a lark! "Which dress for the meeting?" Can any mind be more free from guile? Nevertheless, to prepare Nicky's mind for what was coming, but in the most general sort of way, the plotter added: "Have most important news for you." And indeed it turned out to be of great import and moment, for no sooner did*

the bird come than it was limed, and the secret treaty for which the crafty Potsdamite had been plotting these nine months, the treaty that was to be forced down the throat of France, the treaty that was to result in a continental coalition against Great Britain and raise Wilhelm to the very pinnacle of power, to the empire of the world—that treaty was at last extorted from the unsuspecting, surprised and bewildered Nicky. "A fine lark!" indeed.

35

Sa Majesté l'Empereur d'Allemagne,

Nyland:

Steamer with pilots shall await your arrival at south end of island Hochland 10-23 July, at sunrise. Micha will accompany me. Best love.

NICKY.

36

From Danzig,
The 16th (29th) of July, 1905,
At 1 o'clock 28 m., P. M.

My wife sends many compliments and thanks for your kind telegram. Reuter telegrams this morning announce cruise of British Channel fleet to Baltic and looking in at our ports, without paying visits of ceremony. Either England is anxious on account of our meeting or they want to frighten me. This will lend more weight to my conversation at Copenhagen. You will receive letter from me to-day. I venture to advise promulgating the Bouliguine bill as soon as possible, so that the representatives of Russian people be elected soon. Meanwhile till that has taken place the peace conference will have been opened and the conditions become known for both sides. With the actual spirit prevailing in Russia the disaffected masses would try to place the whole

responsibility for all disadvantageable consequences on your shoulders, and the successes as results of Witte's personal management. It would be excellent as a first task for these representatives, if you gave them the treaty of peace after it has been formulated, to vote upon, thus leaving the odium of the decision to the country and thereby giving the Russian people a voice in the matter of their own prosperity, which they so much wish for. The outcome would be their work and therefore stop the mouths of the opposition. Best love to Alice.

WILLY.

[*The arch plotter's mind was disturbed. A British fleet was cruising in the Baltic, but it paid no visit of ceremony. Had the British got wind of what passed at Bjorkö? Were they afraid, or did they mean to frighten him? At any rate he was going to Copenhagen, appar-*

ently to inform the Danish King of the fate awaiting him and his country whenever the arrangement consummated at Bjorkö would be carried out. "The conversation at Copenhagen" must also have been arranged at Bjorkö, for the Kaiser wrote of it as something to which both of them were looking forward.

From international embroilments the Kaiser turned to the internal affairs of Russia and advised the Tsar to promulgate the Bouliguine bill as soon as possible. To understand the full meaning of this advice we must recall the disturbed condition of Russia at the time. The defeat suffered at the hands of the Japanese had severely shaken the Russian autocracy, and after the assassination of von Plehve the Tsar felt obliged to appoint the liberal Prince Sviatopolk-Mirsky as Minister of the Interior. But the Prince proved too liberal for his master and was dismissed in February, 1905. On February 18th a reactionary im-

perial manifesto reaffirmed the principle of autocracy. Bouliguine, Prince Mirsky's successor, had no knowledge of this manifesto until after its publication. He hastened to the Tsar and on the same day obtained the issue of a new rescript, stating the Tsar's intention to summon representatives of the people to aid him in the "preparation and examination of legislative proposals," and at the same time preserving the "fundamental laws of the empire" inviolate. To carry the Tsar's promise into effect, a commission was appointed with the Tsar as its chairman. The new law (apparently the "Bouliguine bill" spoken of by the Kaiser) was promulgated on August 6th. The imperial Duma was to be no more than a consultative body charged with the examination of legislative proposals before they reached the imperial council, but the duty and right of passing them into law was reserved to the autocrat alone. Moreover, the members of the

Duma were to be elected upon a narrow complicated franchise, and, in addition, were placed at the mercy of the government by a clause in the law of August 6th, which empowered the Directing Senate to suspend them or deprive them of their seats altogether. The promulgation of this mock constitution led to a furious agitation among the masses, which culminated in a nation-wide general strike—perhaps the most remarkable and certainly the most novel political phenomenon of modern times. Finally, the Tsar was forced to issue the manifesto of October 30th, promising a real national representation, liberty of conscience and press, and guarantees for individual liberty. Count Witte became the first Premier under the new Constitution.

The Kaiser's advice relates to the earlier proposed mock parliament. It is truly Machiavellian. The war having resulted in an uninterrupted succession of disasters, to which

the Kaiser's own advice had contributed, and a disagreeable peace being in sight, the Kaiser advised the Tsar to throw the responsibility upon the representatives of the Russian people, who had nothing whatever to say about the making of the war. The Tsar would thus save his own skin, while appearing to have made substantial concessions to the demands of the Russian people for representation and self-government.]

37

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Danzig:

I was deeply touched by your kind letter and thank you for telegram. Have also heard about British Channel fleet's projected appearance in the Baltic.

Your visit to Copenhagen comes in very good time. Hope you will be pleased with

result of your conversations there. Shall impatiently await short notice from you about visit. Best love to Victori from both. Wish you success.

NICKY.

[*The echoing character of Nicky's remarks is quite amusing. The Kaiser told him of the British fleet's cruise in the Baltic, so he also heard of its projected appearance. The Kaiser said that the fleet's visit would lend more weight to his conversation at Copenhagen, so Nicky also said he would be pleased with the result of the conversations there. When the Kaiser later informed him that he thought it best not to speak of the secret alliance, Nicky wrote: "You were quite right in not letting anything be known about our Alliance." The eagerness of poor Nicky to agree in everything with his stronger-minded friend and mentor was truly pitiful.*]

38

From Sassnitz (ile of Rugen),
The 2d of Aug. (22d of July), 1905,
At 1 o'clock, night.

Visit passed off well, under extreme kindness shown to me by whole family, especially by your dear old grandfather. After my arrival I soon found out through reading the press reports—Danish and foreign—that a very strong current of mistrust and apprehension had been gendered against my visit, especially from England. The King had been so intimidated and public opinion so worked upon that I was unable to touch the question we had agreed I had to mention to him. The British Minister, dining with one of my gentlemen, used very violent language against me, accusing me of the vilest plans and intrigues and declaring that every Englishman knew and was convinced I was working for a war with and for destruction of England. You

may imagine what stuff a man like this may have been distilling into the minds of the Danish family, court and people. I did all in my power to dispel the cloud of distrust by behaving quite unconcernedly and making no allusion to serious politics at all; also, considering the great number of channels leading from Copenhagen to London and the proverbial want of discretion at the Danish court, I was afraid to let anything be known about our alliance, as it would immediately have been communicated to London, a most impossible thing as long as the treaty is to remain secret for the present. By a long conversation with Isvolsky, however, I was able to gather that the actual Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Raben, and a number of persons of influence have already come to the conviction that in case of war and impending attack on the Baltic from the foreign Power, the Danes expect—their inability and helplessness to uphold even

the shadow of neutrality against an invasion being evident—that Russia and Germany will immediately take steps to safeguard their interests by laying hand on Denmark and occupying it during the war. As this would in the same time guarantee the territory and future existence of dynasty and country, the Danes are slowly resigning themselves to this alternative and making up their minds accordingly. This being exactly what you wished and hoped for, I thought it better not to touch the subject with the Danes and refrained from making any allusions, as it is better to let the idea develop and ripen in their heads and to let them draw the final conclusions themselves, so that they will on their own accord be moved to lean upon us and fall in line with our two countries. "Tout vient a qui sait attendre."

The question about Charles going to Norway has been arranged up to the smallest detail, England having consented to every-

thing, and there is nothing to be done any more. I talked with Charles about his prospects and found him very sober and without any illusions about his task.

What do you say to the programme of festivities for your allies at Cowes? The whole of the Crimean veterans have been invited to meet former "brothers in arms" who fought with them against Russia. Very delicate indeed. It shows I was right when I warned you two years ago of reforming of old "Crimean combination" they are fast warming up again with a vengeance.

Weather was fine. Best love to Alice.

WILLY.

39

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Sassnitz:

Thank you warmly for interesting details. Glad your visit went off well. You were quite

right in not letting anything be known about our alliance. As the question about Charles going to Norway is settled, I understand that nothing can be done. Am waiting for report from Isvolsky about question of Danish neutrality in its last phase. Best love from Alexandrine.

NICKY.

40

From "Wilhelmshöhe,"
The 7th (20th) of August, 1905,
At 11 o'clock 34 min., morning.

My Ambassador just informed me that you have ordered the decree to be published which renders to convocation of "Great Duma" the statutes to be formed on lines somewhat similar to our "Staats Rath," giving it the form of "consultative body." I beg you to accept my warmest congratulations for this great step forward in the development of Russia. By the

papers I gather that in general the peace negotiations are going on satisfactorily, but that there are some points which offer some difficulty to agreement. Before you take your final decision for peace or continuation of war —latter will be of far reaching consequence, difficult to foresee to the utmost result, and will cost unlimited lives, blood and money—I should fancy it an excellent procedure if you were to submit this question to the "Great Duma" first. As it represents the people of Russia its answer would be the voice of Russia. Should it decide for peace, you are empowered by the nation to conclude peace on the proposals submitted to your delegates at Washington, and if thus Russia itself thinks that its honour is not impaired you can return your sword to its scabbard with the word of Francis I, "Tout est perdu fors l'honneur." Nobody in your army or country or in the rest of the world has a right to blame you for

this act. If on other hand the "Duma" thinks the proposal unacceptable and the Japanese government refuse to treat on other basis, then again it is Russia that through the voice of the "Duma" invites you its Emperor to continue the fight, thus taking the full responsibility for the whole of the consequence on itself and shielding you once for all before the world and history in the future from the reproach that you have sacrificed thousands of Russia's sons without asking the country, or even against their wishes. This will lend your personal action a grand stimulus and strength, as you will feel yourself borne by the will of the whole of your people decided to fight to the bitter end, regardless of time, losses and privations, which is the only possible way to proceed if the war is to continue. I would in your place not miss this first and best opportunity to decide to get into close touch with your country's feelings and wishes about peace

or war, giving the Russian people the long wished for opportunity to decide or take part in the decision relating to its future—which it has a positive right to—and also of giving the "Duma" immediately a fine opportunity to work and to show what it is able to do, and whether it comes up to the expectation everybody puts into it. The decisions which are to be taken are so terribly earnest in their consequences and so far reaching that it is quite impossible for any mortal sovereign to take the responsibility for them alone on his shoulders without help of his people. May God be with you. Do not forget the line advancement vis-à-vis of the guard.

WILLY.

41

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Wilhelmshöhe:

Accept my warmest thanks for your kind

telegram, which touched me deeply. I could not answer you before, being occupied with manœuvres in the neighbourhood of Krasnoe Selo. The interest you take in the future convocation of the "Duma" gives me great pleasure. I believe that the loyalty and good sense of my people will be a serious help for the development of Russia in this consultative body. For the last three months I have thought much about the question of peace or war. I receive daily telegrams, letters, addresses, &c., begging me not to conclude peace on hard terms. There are two points upon which every goood Russian agrees to continue the fight to the end if Japan insists on them—not an inch of our territory, not one rouble of war indemnity. And these are precisely the terms which the Japanese do not want to give way in. Nothing either will induce me to consent to these two demands. Therefore there is no hope for peace for the present.

You know how I hate bloodshed, but still it is preferable to an ignominious peace, when the faith in oneself, in one's fatherland, would be scattered to pieces. Perhaps to-morrow this question will be decided. I am ready to carry the whole responsibility myself, my conscience being clear, and knowing the great bulk of my people backing me up. I am perfectly aware of the immense seriousness of the moment I am living in, but I cannot act otherwise. Thank you for the interest you take in my troubles. Best love from Alix.

NICKY.

42

Homburg Schloss, September 4th.

Witte is, as I hear, on his return journey. Would you allow him to visit me "en passant" on his way to Russia, as I intend decorating him on account of the coming into existence of the treaty of commerce, which he concluded

last year with Bülow. Happy cruise. Our manœuvres most interesting in lovely country, but very wet. Best love to Alix.

WILLY.

43

Rominten, September 11th.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur:

By your kind order Witte will be here on 26-13 m. Is he informed of our treaty? Am I to tell him about it if he is not? Best love to Alix. Killed four stags here, nothing especially big. Weather cool and fine. Waidmanns Heil.

WILLY.

44

Sa Majesté l'Empereur:

Rominten:

Till now the Grand Duke Nicholas, the War Minister, the chief of General Staff and Lams-

dorff are informed about treaty. Have nothing against your telling Witte about it. Enjoying my stay on the Polar Star; dry, fine weather. Best love from Alix. Waidmanns Dank.

NICKY.

45

Cablegrams from Washington brought me news of the agreement of the conference on preliminaries of peace, by which the final conclusion of peace is, it seems, at last guaranteed. May I express my most heartful compliments that a solution has been found which enables Russia to emerge with full honour out of the war and which pays tribute in every respect to the gallantry of your army as your constancy in vindicating Russia's rights and national honour? I hear Japan has conceded all your demands. President Roosevelt, I hear, has made nearly superhuman efforts to induce

Japan to give way. He has really done a great work for your country and the whole world. The more so as I heard from him that England positively refused to budge a finger to help him in working upon their allies, the Japanese, to give way to his demands. Once more sincerest compliment. I am glad if I have been able to be of any use to you in this time. Best love to Alix.

WILLY.

[*"Waidmanns Heil" means "Huntman's Greetings" which the Tsar echoed, as usual.*]

46

Gluchburgostsee, September 29th.

The working of treaty does not—as we agreed at Bjorkö—collide with the Franco-Russian Alliance, provided, of course, the latter is not aimed directly at my country. On

the other hand, the obligations of Russia toward France can only go so far as France merits them through her behaviour. Your ally has notoriously left you in the lurch during the whole war, whereas Germany helped you in every way as far as it could without infringing the laws of neutrality. That puts Russia morally also under obligations to us; do ut des. Meanwhile the indiscretions of Delcassé have shown the world that though France is your ally she nevertheless made an agreement with England and was on the verge of surprising Germany, with British help, in the middle of peace, while I was doing my best to you and your country, her ally. This is an experiment which she must not repeat again and against a repetition of which I must expect you to guard me. I fully agree with you that it will cost time, labour and patience to induce France to join us both, but the reasonable people will in future make themselves heard

and felt. Our Moroccan business is regulated to entire satisfaction, so that the air is free for better understanding between us. Our treaty is a very good base to build upon. We joined hands and signed before God, who heard our vows. I therefore think that the treaty can well come into existence.

But if you wish any changes in the words or clauses or provisions for the future or different emergencies—as for instance, the absolute refusal of France, which is improbable—I gladly await any proposals you will think fit to lay before me. Till these have been laid before me and are agreed upon the treaty must be adhered to by us as it is. The whole of your influential press, Nowosti Nowie Wremja, Russj, etc., have since a fortnight become violently anti-German and pro-British. Partly they are bought by heavy sums of British money no doubt. Still it makes my people very chary and does great harm to the rela-

tions newly growing between our countries. All these occurrences show that times are troubled and that we must have clear courses to steer; the treaty we signed is a means of keeping straight, without interfering with your alliance as such. What is signed is signed, and God is our testator. I shall await your proposals. Best love to Alix.

WILLY.

[*Now that peace had been concluded with Japan, the Tsar seemed to pick up some courage and ceased to be a mere colourless echo of Wilhelm.*

The statement that France, in the midst of peace, "was on the verge of surprising Germany, with British help" was a shameless invention on the part of the Kaiser. Equally non-existent were the indiscretions of Delcassé, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, since 1889. What actually happened was a gross

provocation of France by the Kaiser in his visit to Fez, a provocation which he repeated later at Agadir. Both exploits were equally spectacular and equally futile. The course of events in relation to Delcassé and Morocco during the time covered by the present correspondence, was as follows:

The clash at Fashoda between Col. Marchand and Lord Kitchener, which demonstrated the danger of colonial complications, and the entrance of Russia upon the Japanese war, which left France without an effective ally in Europe, proved to British as well as to French statesmen the urgent necessity of arriving at a complete mutual understanding, particularly in view of the ambitions and intrigues of the Kaiser. The result was the general agreement between France and England of April 8, 1904. All minor disputes were settled. France recognised the British occupation of Egypt and gave her a free hand in that coun-

try. And Britain in return granted to France similar rights in Morocco. With regard to Morocco, Germany had declared that her interests there were purely commercial. In January, 1905, a French diplomatic mission arrived in Fez and presented to the Sultan a comprehensive programme of reforms, practically taking away from him every independent power. When France thus demonstrated her intention to establish a protectorate over Morocco, the Kaiser resorted to a theatrical coup. On March 31, he suddenly arrived in Tangier and proclaimed his determination to protect German interests in Morocco as well as the independent authority of the Sultan. Two months later the German Minister to Portugal, Count von Tattenbach, came to Fez with the double object of gaining special privileges for Germany and defeating the French plans. On May 28 the Sultan rejected the entire French reform programme and demanded the holding

of an international conference regarding Morocco. As a result, the conference of Algeceiras was called. It opened January 16, 1906. The act of agreement was signed April 7, 1906, and was proclaimed January 22, 1907. At this conference the previous French agreement with England and Spain was partially nullified; nevertheless Germany suffered a diplomatic defeat, Austria alone supporting her claims. France was given powers which, by liberal interpretation, were capable of being extended into a right of complete control over Morocco. Eventually they were so extended.

But meanwhile, shortly after the rejection of the French demands by the Moorish sultan, the Kaiser played another of his characteristic, spectacular, but fruitless coups. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Theophile Delcassé, had earned his bitter hatred both because of the entente with England, his Morocco

policy, and his success in conciliating Italy and establishing cordial relations with her, thereby weakening the Triple Alliance. By a brutal threat of war against France, the Kaiser forced upon the Rouvier cabinet the retirement of M. Delcassé on June 6, 1905. On the same date Count von Bülow, the Imperial Chancellor, was raised by his master to the rank of Prince, apparently as a reward for the humiliation imposed upon France.

The policy of France in Morocco has been misunderstood in various quarters. It was by no means due entirely, or even principally, to greed for colonial expansion. The primary motive of this policy has been to keep Germany out of Morocco. France could not afford to have so dangerous a neighbour on her North African flank.]

47

Hohenzollern, September 30th.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Glücksburg:

As Fritz Leopold arrives on Sunday to present himself, after having been under fire on several occasions, may I decorate him with the St. Georges Cross of fourth class? General Linievitch reported to me about his coolness and excellent behaviour in several affairs in May last. Best love.

NICKY.

48

Kiel, 13 Octobre, 1905,
Peterhof, 30 September, 1905.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur:

Most touched and thankful for your kind intention. I envy him this coveted decoration; best love. Horrible weather.

WILLY.

49

From Neues Palais, 2–15 X. 2. 27.

So glad to know my brother-in-law, back from war, under your roof. Many thanks once more for the great honour of St. George Cross. It seems that the . . . arch mischiefmaker of Europe in London is at work again. The revelations of Delcassé, notwithstanding which terribly compromised him and his government, as planning war against our friendly nation in peace. Like brigands in a wood, he has sent Benkendorff—your Ambassador—to Copenhagen on a clandestine mission to your mother with the instructions to win her over to influence you for a policy against me. The Foreign Office in London knows about his journey, which is denied at your Embassy there. I may, of course, be misinformed, but the extraordinary behaviour of England leads me to think that it cannot do

harm to inform you at all events. It is peculiar that your Ambassador should lend himself to such tricks, as they are bound to be found out, thereby creating fresh excitement, of which I think we had quite enough lately. Best love. Weather horrible.

WILLY.

[*Here again the Kaiser repeated the utterly unfounded accusation against M. Delcassé as well as against King Edward, that they were planning war against peaceful Germany. Apparently Wilhelm had come to regard the age-long quarrel between France and England not merely as an asset, but as a vested interest of Prussia, an interest that was violated by the friendly settlement of the quarrel. As regards the accusation concerning Benkendorff's mission to Copenhagen, Wilhelm himself was by no means sure of its truthfulness—"I may of course be misinformed," he said—yet he com-*

pared King Edward to a "brigand in a wood!" What words are fit to characterize the conduct of a monarch so unscrupulous and irresponsible?]

50

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Neues Palais:

Best thanks for your telegrams. Benkendorff by my permission, as my mother invited him to come as a friend of the Danish family. What sort of conversation went on I certainly do not know. But I can resolutely assure you that nothing can influence me except the interest, safeguard and honour of my country. Benkendorff is a loyal subject and a real gentleman. I know he would never lend himself to any false tricks even if they came from the "great mischiefmaker" himself. Delcassé's revelations are extraordinary, but I

think Bülow's conversations with some newspaper correspondents have not helped much to clear up the situation. I shall write to you soon. Fritz Leopold looks brown; very well. Best love from both.

NICKY.

[*For the first time the Tsar assumed an almost independent tone. He defended Benkendorff, and matched Delcassé's revelations with Bülow's conversations. And the question naturally arises, was his faithful echoing of every wish and word of Wilhelm up till that time, mere playing and shamming, owing to his fear of the rattling of the Prussian sword while he was preoccupied with the Japanese war?*]

51

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Homburg:

Very kind of you to wish to see Witte and decorate him. Are enjoying our cruise; have luckily fine, cool weather. Best love from all.

NICKY.

52

From Neues Palais, 12–26 XI., 1905.

Thanks for letter. Shall reply after hearing Chancellor. Your information about Tattenbach incorrect. He has acted "en concert" with his friend colleague the whole time, and they have both left Fez a while ago. I quite agree that complications should by all means be avoided in or near Europe. There is no fear of any arising in or about Morocco; but Macedonia and the Balkans are much more

dangerous, and the naval demonstration against Turkey in this moment may lead to most unexpected consequences should the "amour propre" of the Islamitic world resent the pressure brought to bear upon their master. The work of the "Crimean combine" is to be detected here. WILLY.

[*The naval demonstration against Turkey toward the end of 1906 was resorted to by the European powers in order to compel the Sultan to submit to a series of demands looking to improvement of the finances in the three Macedonian vilayets of Saloniki, Monastir, and Kossovo. They also insisted upon the appointment of a board of six commissioners, one for each Power, to superintend the execution of the reforms. As with all Balkan reform schemes, the present scheme was far from adequate, and there was but slight harmony among the Great Powers. Germany and Austria-Hungary pre-*

ferred to interfere as little as possible with the administration of the vilayets, while Russia, backed by France and Great Britain, wished to go much further. In these circumstances any reference by Wilhelm to the "Crimean Combine" was bound to fall on barren ground.]

53

19, XI., '05.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Neues Palais:

Best thanks for your kind letter, that gave me great pleasure. Our alliance with France is a defensive one. Think the declaration I sent you could remain in force until France accepts our new agreement. I will certainly do all in my power to bring the Morocco conference to a general understanding. Best love from us both. NICKY.

[*Apparently the Tsar was now insisting upon a modification of the secret treaty with Wilhelm, saying that the declaration embodying his modifications could remain in force until France was willing to join.*]

54

25, XI., '05.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Berlin:

Flügel Adjutant Schebeko must receive a new nomination. I propose to replace him by Colonel Tatischeff of my Guard Hussars. He was a long time with Uncle Wladimir, has been often in Berlin, speaks very good German. I intend to promote him general of the suite on my namesday, and with your approval to attach him to your person. At the same time I would like to know whether you find it necessary we should again name special military

attachés except Lamsdorff and Tatischeff. Best love from Alix.

NICKY.

55

From Neues Palais, 30th of
November (13 of December), 1905,
At 8:20 morn.

Colonel Tatischeff you propose to attach to my person shall be welcome. Respecting your question about the special military attachés, besides those "à la suite" of our respective persons, I think it practical they should be created. Formerly it was always so. It places the personal attachés into precarious and difficult positions if they are to do their "trade" in the same time they are in the staff of the sovereigns. They must be reserved for this honour alone and only gather and transmit loyally the official military or confidential informations they receive from the sovereign, or by

the sovereign's permission from the official military authorities. They must be persons of blameless character, upon whom the sovereigns can implicitly rely and enjoy the fullest confidence of the officers of the respective Imperial headquarters, to whom they are to belong. This implied that they should have nothing whatever to do with the usual "trade" of the simple military agent. Werder's position with your grandfather is a good example how it ought to be. Best love to Alix.

WILLY.

56

VI. 10, 1906; IV. 27 (sic).

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Berlin:

With the change of Ministry Count Lamsdorff is leaving, and I intend to replace him by Isvolsky. I am very sorry not to be able to

keep him for Berlin, but need his services now here; am sure will understand it. Have come over to Peterhof, as real summer weather has set in. Saw Tatischeff to-day, who gave me your kind messages. Best love from both.

NICKY.

57

June 10 (April 27), 1906,
From Strasbourg, at 6 o'clock 45 m.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Péterhof:

Thanks for information about Iswolsky, which I quite understand. Also here summer has set in; all chestnuts and lilacs are in full bloom and the air is very warm. Best love to Alix.

WILLIAM.

[*The correspondence was growing palpably briefer and colder. Wilhelm thanked the*

Tsar for the information about Isvolsky's appointment to the foreign office. He "quite understands" it, but seemed to have little relish for it.]

58

6. 7, '06.

You know how I was looking forward to our meeting in the first of August. But things are becoming so serious that I have decided to disband the Duma shortly. I am sure you will understand that in these circumstances I cannot leave my country. With sincere regret I have to put off my visit to your shores for a certain time. This involuntary postponement makes my impatience to see you grow. Best love from both.

NICKY.

[*The first imperial duma assembled in the Winter Palace on May 10, 1906. It was dominated by the Constitutional Democratic*

party (Cadets). It came into immediate conflict with the Crown by demanding general amnesty for the many thousands who were languishing in prison and whose efforts had made the duma possible. The address in reply to the speech from the Throne, which was voted on May 18, demanded the establishment of universal suffrage, a responsible cabinet, suppression of the imperial council, political amnesty, equality of all classes before the law, abolition of all disabilities because of race, class or religion, reforms in the administration of public finance, education, local government and labour legislation, abolition of capital punishment, and compulsory expropriation of the landlords with compensation, the land to be distributed among the peasants. These demands met with a flat refusal from Goremykin, who succeeded Count Witte as Premier. On July 22, the duma was dissolved by imperial edict, which fixed March 5, 1907, as the

date for the assembling of the new duma, to be elected upon a more complicated and restricted franchise.]

59

From Homburg (Trondhjem),
7th (20th) July, 1906,
At 10 o'clock, 55 min.

I deeply deplore that we cannot meet but fully understand your reason that prevents you leaving your country in this moment. I fervently hope that we may meet later on in quieter times. God be with you and preserve you. Best love to Alice.

WILLY.

60

From Wilhelmshohe,
3 (16) of August, 1906,
6 o'clock, 5 m., evening.

Uncle Bertie's visit has passed off most satisfactorily. He is looking well and seems to

be in good spirits. We both agreed that the maintenance of friendly relations between our two countries is not only a blessing for them, but also for all other nations. I most sincerely hope that the exchange of views between uncle and myself, which all go towards the confirmation of the world's peace, might be of benefit to you and your great empire.

WILLY.

61

Wilhelmshohe, 4 August, 1906.

I express my warmest thanks for your kind telegram. The maintenance of friendly relations between Germany and England is an absolute necessity for the world. I am pleased about this result of Uncle Bertie's visit.

NICKY.

62

S. M. l'Empereur,

Berlin, 23, 8, 1906:

Having received Tatischeff's report about your opinion of Boris' presence of war army manœuvres, I recall him from the frontier. Fondest love.

NICKY.

63

From Travemunde,
The 17th (30th) of June, 1907,
At 11 o'clock 25 m., night.

I received by Tatischeff your kind proposal to come to Swinemünde about the sixth of August, leaving Peterhof the fourth. I am very thankful for this intention, but if it were feasible for you to arrive already the third I should prefer this day, as I have already fixed an inspection programme for myself beginning with the sixth of August, which cannot

be changed without arousing public attention. I also heard by Captain Hintze that you were able to come between the twenty-third of July and the fourteenth of August, and I hope the third will not be inconvenient to you. Please let me know if the third suits you then. I shall propose by Captain Hintze particulars for our meeting, to which I look forward with heartful expectation.

WILLIAM.

64

Peterhof, 18 VI. (1 VIII.), 1907.

Sa Majesté l'Empereur,

Travemünde:

Agree with pleasure to arrive on the third of August, new style. For me also it is most convenient. Shall be thankful for particulars sent through Hintze. Wish you a smooth, agreeable cruise in the north.

NICKY.

65

2 VIII., 1907.

Meeting with Uncle Bertie satisfactory. Uncle in good humour and peacefully disposed. Visibly impressed by the —— in Macedonia. Thinks joint remonstrances in Athens necessary. When asked by the King about the actual state of Russia I was happy to inform him that I heard from you that all went well, the dismissal of the Duma by you being the same act as the dismissal of the Portuguese Parliament by his cousin Carlos. After several rainy days we have since yesterday beautiful weather, and made yesterday morning auto drive through the silent woods of the neighbourhood. Hope so much you found Alix in good health. Best love to her.

WILLY.

[*The correspondence closed with an ominous comparison. The Kaiser was as anxious as ever to cause ill-feeling between the Tsar and King Edward, whom he styled the "arch-mischiefmaker of Europe." He therefore suggested, by indirection, that while King Edward did not approve of the dismissal of the Duma, he, Wilhelm, defended the act on the ground that it was of the same nature as the dismissal of the Portuguese parliament by King Carlos. The comparison was only too true, in antecedents as well as in results. Conditions in Portugal were a repetition, on a small scale, of the conditions in the great Russian empire. The finances of the state were in a chaotic condition. Every year the budget showed a deficit. The national debt was constantly increasing. A large part of the expenditure was unproductive, and the public service was rotten with corruption. The working classes, peasants as well as artisans, were ground down with*

taxation. Strikes, peasant uprisings, military mutinies kept the country in constant turmoil. Elections and dissolutions of the Cortes followed each other in rapid succession. Finally the Constitution was suspended in May, 1907, and government by ministerial decrees followed, under the practical dictatorship of Dom Franco, the Premier. As a result, the King and the Crown Prince were assassinated on February 1, 1908. The second son of King Carlos succeeded him as Manoel II, but he was deposed on October 5, 1910, as the result of a revolution, and a republic was established.

When Nicholas II heard the news of the assassination of King Carlos, and later of the deposition of Manoel and the establishment of the republic, did the comparison and justification made by his friend in Potsdam occur to his mind? It might have been better for him if it did and if he had changed his course from that advised and justified by Wilhelm. Wit-

tingly or unwittingly, the Kaiser's advice lured him to destruction, in his conduct of the war with Japan as well as in his relations with his own people.]

THE END

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